

# Cohasset Mariner

The Mariner (and supplements) is a paid circulation newspaper published every Thursday at 541 Plain St., Marshfield, Mass. 02050 for and about the residents of Cohasset. Telephone 383-6321 or 837-3500. Mailing address: Box 71, Cohasset, Mass. 02025. Second class postage paid at Marshfield, Mass. 02050.

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As the Mariner goes to press Tuesday night, all news and advertising copy must be received by Monday at 5 p.m. Classified advertising must be received by Monday at noon. Readers are invited to submit personal items, accounts of social functions, meetings, weddings and engagements. Photographs (black and white glossy) are also welcome.

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## Editorial

### Clean Up Common

(The following remarks by the Rev. Edward Atkinson were excerpted from the weekly newsletter of the First Parish Church, Ed.)

Perhaps it is because I spend so much time working in a building that borders the Cohasset Common that the condition of the Common has become such a major irritant to me, but it has.

No, it is not the young people playing ball and listening to music that bother me. I think that is terrific. The Common should be a gathering place for people of all ages and it should be a place for play and enjoyment. I would be the last one to suggest we ever make the Common a place so delicate and fragile we have to say, "Look, but don't touch!" Few signs are less becoming to a public park than the ones announcing, "Keep Off The Grass." I am also aware and appreciative of the work that Tree and Park Supt. Peter Laugelle puts into the care of the Common. But the fact remains that the Common is a mess, littered almost daily, the reflecting pool filled with mud and garbage, the grass badly worn and automobile tire tracks zig-zagged across the mud.

Where is our sense of civic pride? Here we have one of the most unique and attractive of the many town commons in New England and yet we cannot seem to find the means to provide trash containers for the Common and empty them regularly, to restore the lawn, to clean and seal the pond and to identify and prosecute those who drive their automobiles recklessly.

Yes, I know there are more important issues in the world today — hunger, war, human rights. But somehow for me the condition of the Common illustrates the world's problems in microcosm.



CHS Basketball Rose To New Heights

## Executive Secretary Recommended

The Committee to Survey the Structure of Town Government has voted to recommend to a future town meeting the establishment of a professional position of an executive secretary in Cohasset.

The committee informed Selectmen recently that, as a result of extensive interviews and meetings with town boards, committee and department officials, they have realized the need for a person to assist within the Selectmen's office to aid in the more efficient running of the town.

The committee enumerated the benefits it believes would result in the position of executive secretary including: the delegation of the Selectmen's day-to-day functions; the assurance of the continuity of the Selectmen's experience; future boards; better coordination between boards and committee; assistance to the Selectmen in pressing for a larger share of government grants and programs; better services to the townspeople and more careful expenditure of tax dollars.

The committee praised Selectmen Arthur Clark for the extensive amount of time he spends serving in his post with only modest compensation. They noted, however, that a time will come when Clark will no longer serve.

In its sessions, the committee met with a representative sample of officials from the state and other communities. These included representatives from the State Department of Community Affairs, the executive secretaries of Sudbury and Norwell and the town administrator of Marshfield.

The state officials informed the committee that roughly a third of all communities in

Massachusetts today employ either a town manager, executive secretary or administrative assistant. They said the trend is toward more professional management at the municipal level when dealing with multi-million dollar bud-

gets.

The town officials all indicated that the Selectmen are the chief policy makers in the towns and that the role of executive secretary or administrative assistant is to implement their decisions.

## Provision Deleted From Water Main Article

Selectmen have agreed to delete a provision included in the warrant article to install a water main on Chief Justice Cushing Highway which would allow the assessment of betterments for users.

Town Counsel Richard Henderson later ruled that the additional wording, which would empower the Board of Water Commissioners to levy special assessments to users to meet part of the water service costs, could be added in a motion to amend the article on the Town Meeting floor.

It was the Selectmen's opinion that the Water Commissioners would approve the article if the assessment provision were included in the article. In that case, it was noted, the article need only pass with a majority vote and not a two-thirds vote.

A similar article for the installation of the water mains, which passed at the Nov. Special Town Meeting, was ruled illegal this winter because it was determined Board of Water Commissioners had refused to extend the main after being requested by residents prior to that meeting.

It was further concluded, according to statute, "If, for any reason, the Board of

Water Commissioners should refuse to extend water mains or pipes into sections of the town not previously supplied with water from the town water works, a two-thirds vote for an annual Town Meeting shall be necessary to annul such refusal."

Robert Davenport, owner of a business which would become a recipient of the extended water service, informed Selectmen that he was opposed to the added provision within the article.

He said that he, personally, would go along with a betterment charge, but knows of many others who would not. He added that no betterments have been charged before for other mains added in town.

Davenport suggested that Selectmen delete the provision and submit the article without the Water Commissioners approval. "Let us take our chances with a two-thirds vote," he said.

The article now requests the appropriation or transfer from available funds \$65,000 to install a water main on Rte. 3A in a northerly direction from King Street approximately 2708 feet to 110 Chief Justice Cushing Highway.

## King Tax Cap Doesn't Fit

To the Editor:

The long-awaited tax cap spending limit proposal which Governor King finally announced, calls for the cities and towns, in a time of unrestrained and frightening inflation, to manage on essentially the same budgets as last year. This could lead to serious disruptions in public education and other essential services in our community.

If inflation continues at its present 12% rate, the result might be a 12 per cent across-the-board cut in all of our public services. In all communities that would mean a reduction in teaching staff, textbooks not replaced, library and guidance cuts, school repairs neglected, and such items as sports, music, transportation and custodial services reduced or abolished.

Further, all public employee salaries could be frozen, which would certainly be unfair, in

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light of the fact that President Carter's guidelines permit a 7 per cent wage increase.

Education takes a large percentage of every community's total operating budget. It is almost inevitable that education would be the first place officials will cut under a cap/limit program.

No rational person opposes tax reductions or elimination of waste in government. Public employees are taxpayers, too, and they are as anxious as any other group to save on taxes, but before you race to support Governor King's proposal, I suggest all voters assess the possible repercussions of this program.

In addition to the possible devastation of quality education and reduction in such humane services as special help for the handicapped and disturbed child or one who requires remedial work, the governor's plan will place our local governments in a strait jacket by subverting home rule. It also represents and encourages a retreat from responsible local governments, and is an unacceptable interference into local affairs, creating more problems than it solves.

It would be wonderful not to have to pay taxes; but we cannot have services without paying for them. It's as simple as that, and unlike California, Massachusetts does not have a multi-billion dollar surplus to make up for significant slashes in the property tax.

Edward F. Sheehan  
 Member,  
 Cohasset Teachers Assoc.